

REMARKS

In an Office Action dated April 19, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 7 and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sweitzer et al. (US 6,018,617) in view of Sonnenfeld (US 6,112,049). Claims 3-6, 8 and 13-17 were objected to as dependent on respective rejected base claims, but otherwise indicated to contain allowable subject matter.¹

Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 11 to incorporate all the limitations from dependent claims 3 and 13, respectively. As amended, independent claims 1 and 11 are of the same scope as original claims 3 and 3, respectively, although in independent form. Since claims 3 and 13 contain patentable subject matter, amended claims 1 and 11 are allowable. Dependent claims 3 and 13 have accordingly been cancelled as superfluous. The chain of dependency has been corrected in claims 4, 5, 14 and 15.

Applicants have amended claims 6, 8, 16 and 17 to re-write the claims in independent form. The scope of the claims has not changed. Since the claims contain patentable subject matter, the claims as now written in independent form are allowable.

In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all claims. In addition, the

¹ The office action states that claim 17 is allowed, but since it is in dependent form, applicants understand this to mean that it contains allowable subject matter.

Examiner is encouraged to contact applicants' attorney by telephone if there are outstanding issues left to be resolved to place this case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

DONALD R. HELLER, et al.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. W. Truelson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

By: _____

Roy W. Truelson

Registration No. 34,265

Telephone: (507) 202-8725